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OREGON OPERATIONS OFFICE

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EPA-REGION 10

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RE: Harbor Comments

How to deal with the Willamette River's pollutants and contamination is something that needs to be made more public. It affects our entire city, including those who live, work, and vacation in Portland. The EPA's current plan to clean up the river does not take into consideration a lot of areas. Going forward with this plan will deliver negative consequences to everyone involved, especially residents and businesses. That is why I am choosing not to stand behind it.

The EPA's plan to dredge the river is based on antiquated data that is no longer valid. New studies have shown a decrease in the river's contamination levels. In fact, this new data shows the water is actually getting rid of the contaminants on its own. Nature has a way of taking care of itself and it seems the Willamette is doing just that. The river has improved its own condition by forty percent compared to what it was when the original data was compiled by the EPA in 2004. Why would we even want to step in and change things if it's recovering so well on its own? By disturbing the natural restoration process, the EPA's plan will only make the problem worse and potentially re-contaminate the river and surrounding areas.

Exposure to these contaminants is a health risk to everyone involved. The ones who are actually performing the work to clean up the water, although I'm sure properly gowned, will be exposed. I'm more concerned about contaminant exposure to business owners, employees, their patrons, and those who frequent the area for recreational purposes. All of whom will have no protection from the pollution that gets stirred up from dredging or moving.

I can only imagine how the economy will suffer poorly as a result of the EPA's current plan as well. An active construction site will diminish the welcoming atmosphere of the Port of Portland for residents or tourists. I know I will not visit the beach while there is construction going on. Small business owners will suffer and possibly have to close up shop because the plan is set to take not just a few months, but possibly years or even decades to complete. This in turn means lost jobs for too many people. It's never a good thing for a community to be without jobs.

The city and the EPA also need to take into consideration the cost of this project and whether it's really money well spent. Taxpayers would be the ones footing this nearly \$1 billion dollar bill for a task that will not sufficiently remove the contamination. Increasing taxes for residents would put an unnecessary burden on them, especially if they were one of the unfortunate ones who lost their job. As a retired pharmacy owner, I can't afford to pay more in my taxes. If we're going to spend millions of dollars to improve our city, let's focus on something that will have a more concrete and immediate outcome with much less negative effects. The homelessness that plagues Portland is more of a pressing issue at the moment. The lives of those living on the streets right now could be immensely improved with that amount of money.

Sincerely,

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